

Minahassa, a summarized history

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Dirk Teeuwen 1996>



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Minahassan farmer 1935

Introduction

I travelled through Minahassa, North Celebes/Sulawesi in 1996. Zig-zag from Manado-Bunaken to Gorontalo. Then, in 1996, I estimated that around 20% of the Minahassans were still able to speak Dutch. No surprise, because I knew some headlines of Minahassan history. Minahassa is very special in the field of colonial history in general, as well as in the field of Dutch colonial history. That goes too, in particular, for Dutch Protestant missionary history. The Dutch period was handled by the Minahassans in a intelligent way very much. The Dutch colonial policy concerning Minahassa was very special as well.

This summarized history is composed with full admiration of Minahassans, admiration of Dutch colonial policy in North Celebes, as well as of Dutch Protestant missionary efforts there.



1935 Maps in chapter 6





1. Interference from Europe

During the second half of the 16th century, both Portuguese and Spanish arrived in North Celebes. Celebes is called Sulawesi now, but from here I shall use the name from the olden days: Celebes.

In 1512 the Portuguese set foot ashore in the Moluccan islands Banda and Amboina. The Muslim Sultan of Ternate – he held some sway over the Minahassa area in North Celebes - entered into a treaty with the Portuguese, a treaty aimed against the Sultanate of Tidore and against the Spaniards. These Europeans were interested in the Minahassa area specially because of its abundance of natural resources, which made Manado a strategic port. However, until 1563-1564 the European influence was limited by the power of the Sultanate of Ternate. (Continued page 5)



Manado harbour 1935



Colonial day-dreaming. Manado 1996
Photo, Dirk Teeuwen, Holland

Dutch warehouses, Manado harbour 1996



Collection Dirk Teeuwen, Holland

Street in Manado 1935

The struggle in the Moluccas between Spaniards and Portuguese ended, more or less, when the Spaniards settled themselves in the Philippines in 1564. The Minahassans were not so much involved in this scene of battle, but the Minahassan tribe of the Babontehu brought the Spaniards to the village of Wenang on the south-western coast of Minahassa in 1549. The Babontehu turned to them for support for their wars against other tribes. Slowly but surely the Minahassans began to hate the Spaniards because of imposed deliveries of wood (hard labour) and rice.

In 1563 Sultan Hairun of Ternate firmly resolved to submit the northern coast of Celebes definitely and to fight against the Bugis. The Bugis were pirates from Makassar/Ujung Panang, ParePare and Maros, in Celebes.

He ordered his son Baäb Babullah Datu Sah to carry out this intention. He conquered Bolaäng-Mongondou (south-western coast of Minahassa) and islamized this animist area. The Portuguese disliked Baäbs ambitions and sailed to Wenang. In 1564 the Portuguese demolished the small Spanish fortress there and drove away the Muslims. In 1580 Spain annexed Portugal. Conflicts between the two countries came to an end.

Photo Dirk Teeuwen, Holland



“Water houses” in Lake Tondano 1996

2. Dutch supremacy

Around 1600 Dutch supremacy in the northern part of the Indonesian Archipelago was a fact. In 1607 they forced the Sultan of Ternate to enter into an alliance with them. Under this alliance the Dutch derived the right to install a governor in Ternate. Nevertheless, in 1623 the Spaniards built a fortress near Manado, and conquered the island of Siau (1), to protect their trade. They planted coffee and made Manado a centre of commerce for Chinese traders who traded the coffee in China.



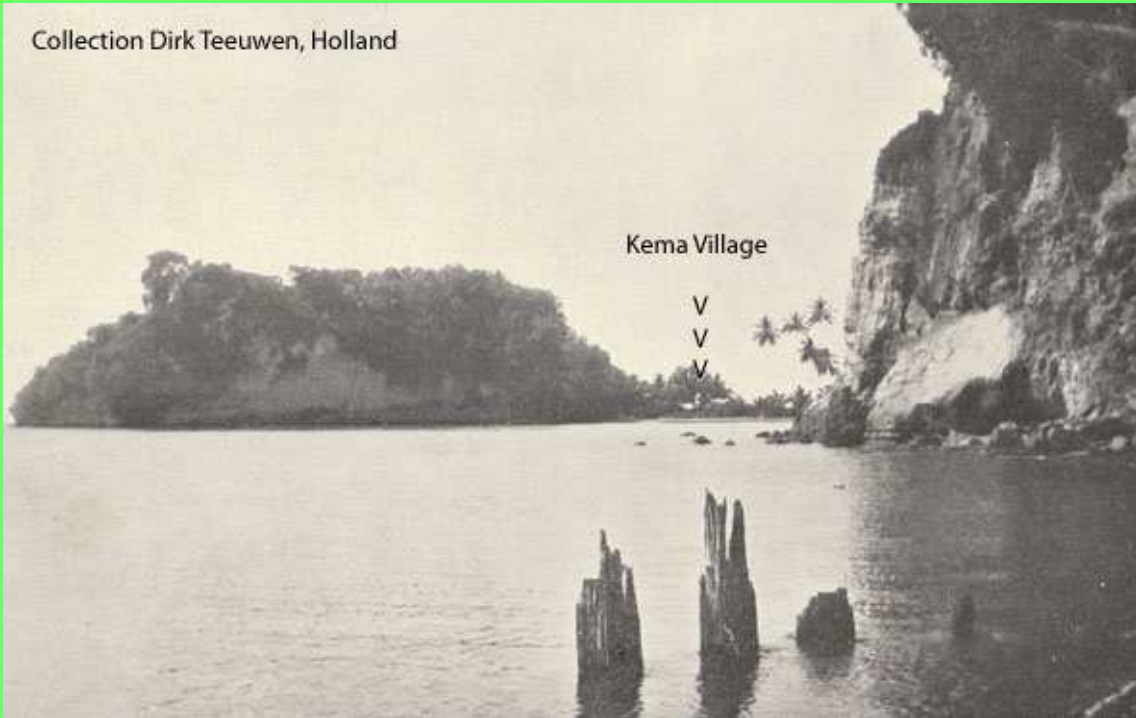
Photo Dirk Teeuwen, Holland

**A dog butcher is busy, Tondano market 1996
Minahassans are enthusiastic dog eaters.**

Also the Sultan of Makassar, now Ujung Pandang in South-West Celebes, assumed power in Manado and its vicinity. He was supported by the Spaniards as well as the English. In 1643 the Minahassans revolted and murdered 40 Castilians. Of course, after doing so, they had enough reason to fear revenge from Manilla. The Minahassans sent a boat, with some representatives on board, to Ternate. There they asked for protection.

The Dutch Governor Wouter Seroyen ordered captain Paulus Andriesz and 120 soldiers to sail to Celebes. Andriesz's warship called "Egmont" was accompanied by some small, manned, boats owned by the Sultan of Ternate. As soon as Manado came in sight, the Sultan's men wet their pants and slipped off. Andriesz returned without success. Nevertheless the Spaniards were terror-stricken and withdraw from Minahassa in 1645.

In 1648 the Dutch and the Spaniards agreed on the withdrawal of the latter from Minahassa forever. The Spanish idea of eternity had relatively limited value. In 1651 the Spaniards took over by force several small Minahassan coastal towns out of the hands of some local rulers, requisitioning a lot of rice. Again in 1654 Minahassan rulers from Supit, Lonto, Paät, Tombariri, Sarongsong and Tomohon asked the Dutch in Ternate for help. The statues of these chiefs are located nowadays in the village of Kauditan, 30 km from Bitung. In the 17th century normally the Dutch colluded with local powers to throw out their European competitors. An unshakeable Dutch habit in the Far East in those days.



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Kema Village

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Kema Bay 1935

In 1655 the Dutch Governor of Ternate and Moluccas, Simon Cos, ordered to build a fortress near Manado. The first commander of this fortress, Paulus Andriesz, was also the first Dutch authority in Minahassa. In 1659 the V.O.C. (2) garrisoned 35 soldiers to fight against the Spaniards and the Sultan of Makassar. The V.O.C. was interested in rice, like the Spaniards were. In 1663 the Spaniards left Minahassa and Moluccas as well. The Dutch occupied Pulau Sangir (3) in 1667.



Collectie Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam
Wikimedia

Fort Amsterdam
Manado circa 1925

Collectie Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam
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Collectie Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam
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Collectie Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam
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Fort Amsterdam, Manado 1925

Robertus Padtbrugge (4), V.O.C.-governor of Ternate and Moluccas, entered into an agreement (see chapter 2) with the village chiefs of Manado and vicinity in 1669.

Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch presence in Minahassa had one of the first Eurasian-Mestizo, mixed blood, communities in the Indonesian archipelago as a result.

Also tens of "Mardijkers" (5), mestizos from the coasts of India and Malaysia, settled around Manado. Mardijkers were "Black Portuguese" - slaves and prisoners of war captured by the Dutch - from India and Malaysia. These "Mardijkers" were free people. That is, after acceptance of the Calvinist Protestant faith, the Dutch set these slaves, prisoners free. Even today "Mardijker" communities can be found in Village/Kampung Tugu - near Tanjung Priok Harbour, in Jakarta - as well as in East-Timor.

2. Establishment of Dutch authority in Minahassa

So, half-way the 17th century there was a rapprochement between the Minahassan chiefs and the Dutch V.O.C. The agreement - which led to domination by the Dutch for the next 300 years - with the local rulers, in 1669 in the Manado area, contained the following main points.

Minahassan Chiefs :

1. the V.O.C. is the supreme ruler;
2. local chiefs accept the obligation to support the V.O.C.;
3. Minahassans maintain Fort Amsterdam in Manado;
4. Minahassan obligation to build bridges and dikes;
5. Minahassan obligation to build warehouses;
6. Minahassan obligation to deliver rice.



Minahassan wedding party, Manado 1935

Photo Dirk Teeuwen, Holland



Protestant church, Lokon 1996

V.O.C.:

- 1. protection of the Manado chiefs and their subjects;**
- 2. protection of other Minahassan tribes (under the condition that they ought to make an end to paying tributes to the Sultan of Bulang (7);**
- 3. no Minahassan liability to pay taxes;**
- 4. no imposed deliveries of wood.**

The agreement led to domination by the Dutch for the next 300 years.

Interesting is a paper written by Padtbrugge (see chapter 1) in 1683. He told that he was very afraid of volcano eruptions. Stones and ashes from Lokon even damaged Dutch ships near Gorontalo, so he tells us. Also he wrote that the "water-people" of Tondano were rather unruly. Living in houses built in Lake Tondano, in the water for safety reasons. These Tondanos were (and are) pride people, not amenable to reason and discipline.

3. Important dates

1798 The V.O.C. went bankrupt, possessions and debts were taken over by the Dutch government.

1801 Arrival of the English.

1802 Treaty of Amiens in France, the Dutch came back.

1806 Two British warships arrived at the roadstead of Manado. The Dutch chased them away.

1807-1810 The Tondano rebellion. The Dutch Army Captain Wentré suppressed the uprising.

1810-1814 The British Period of Minahassa.

1814-1817 British-Dutch interval.

1817 The Dutch took over again.

1819 Smallpox epidemic, twenty percent of the population died.

1820 Appointment of vaccination officials.

1824 Governor-General Van der Capelle paid a visit to Manado. From now on Manado was a separate Residency, governed by a Resident, under the authority of the Governor of Ternate and the Moluccas, seated in Amboina. Dutch influence flourished as the Minahassans embraced Dutch culture and Protestant religion, thanks to the Netherland Missionary Society, in Dutch "Nederlandse Zendingsbond".

1825-1830 Java War

1826-1830 Several Minahassan Chiefs fought, with 1.420 of their men, in the Dutch East-Indian Army against Diponegoro in the Java War. The Chiefs were appointed Captain or Lieutenant.

1831 The Protestant Missionaries Riedel and Schwarz settled themselves in Tondano and Kakas.

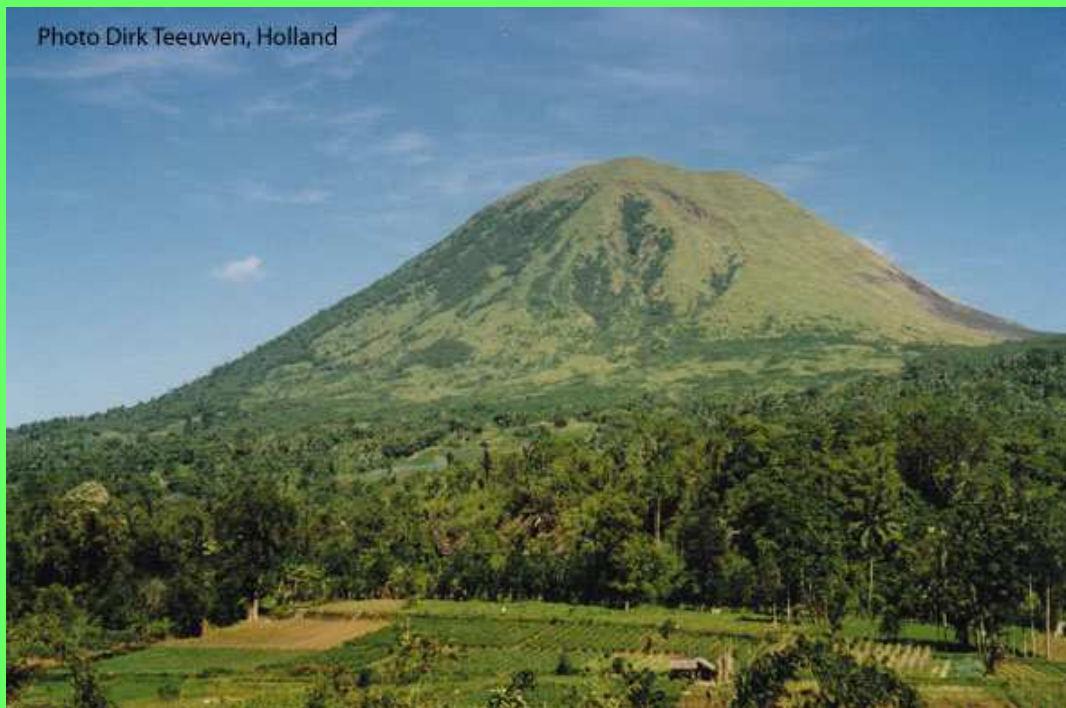
1852 An era of education, founding of protestant (mission-)schools, began. Thanks to the Resident A. J. F. Jansen. The schools taught in Dutch. This was a first attempt of mass education in Indonesia. From now on education gave Minahassan graduates - like graduates from Ambon and Roti - a considerable edge in gaining civil service, military and other positions of influence. Western education started much earlier here than in other parts of Indonesia. Minahassans were an educated elite.

1853-1854 Measles and dysentery, 13.000 people died.

1859 Resident Jansen ordered the Chiefs to set their slaves free. Slavery in the Dutch East-Indies came to an end.

1919 Gunung/Mountain Lokon and Gunung Tangkoko-Batuangus became nature reserves. Governor-General Count Van Limburg Stirum visited the reserves.

1933 The Church of Minahassa became an independent Protestant church.



Mount Lokon 1996



Dutch colonial house, Gorontalo 1996

4. Aftermath

In 1817 Dutch rule was re-established until 1949. After 1817 the Minahassans and the Dutch became so close that the Residency was often referred to as the twelfth province of the Netherlands. A Manado based political movement even campaigned for the integration into the Dutch state in 1947.

The Netherland Missionary Society, a Calvinist group, turned from an almost exclusive interest in the Moluccas further to Minahassa. The conversion of the Minahassans was almost complete by 1860. In chapter 3 we saw that with the missionaries came mission schools, resulting in Western education in Minahassa, as well as in Amboina and Roti, started much earlier than in other parts of Indonesia. The Dutch government took over some of these schools and also setup others. Minahassans remained among the educated Indonesian elite until today. (Continued page 13)



Dutch Delft Blue Ceramics, made in Tomohon Minahassa, 1996

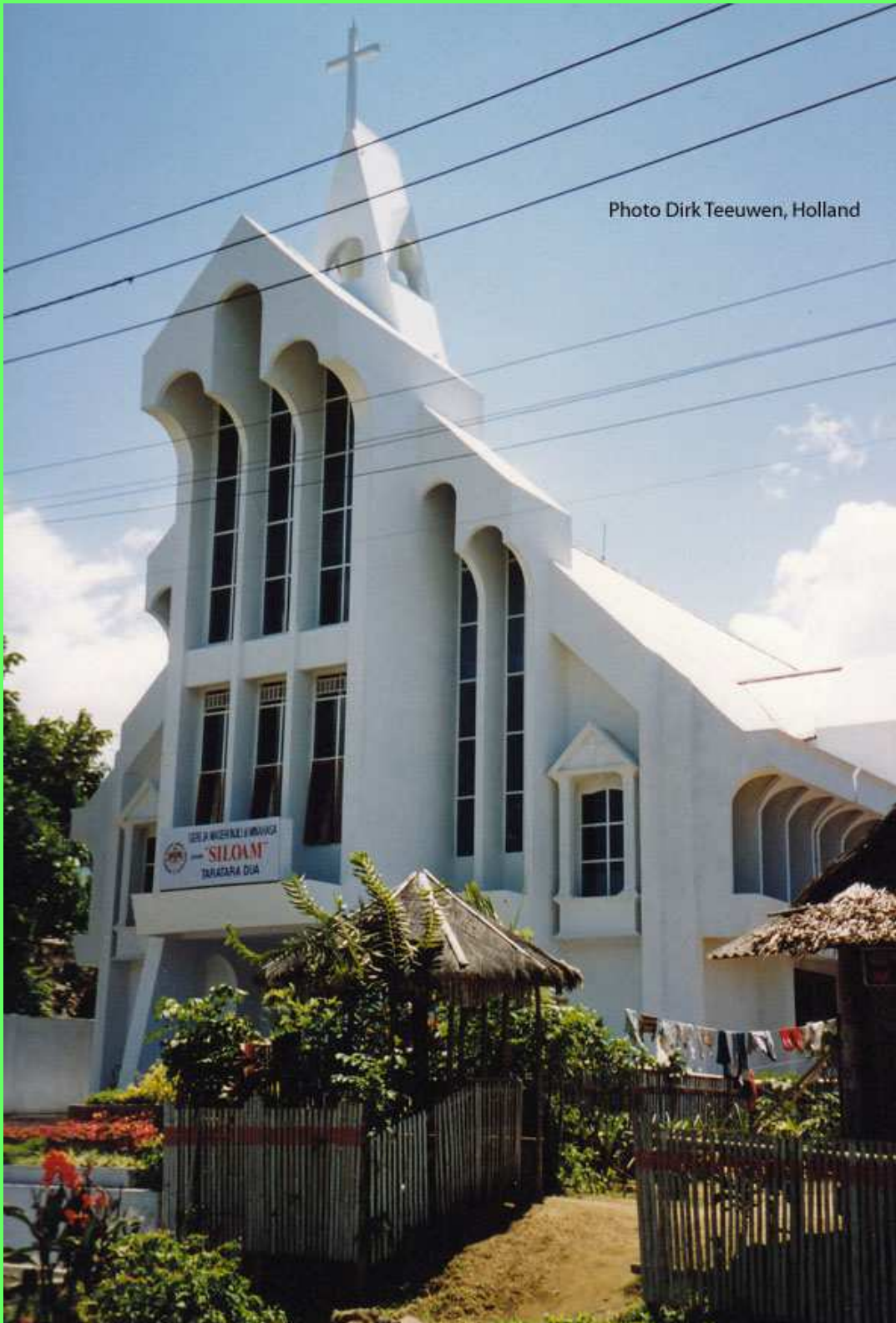


Photo Dirk Teeuwen, Holland

Protestant church, TaraTara 1996

As Dutch East-Indian Army soldiers the Minahassan "Manadonese", next to the Ambonese, fought alongside the Dutch to submit rebellions in the Indonesian Archipelago. They were competent and trustworthy soldiers. Young men from Minahassa were obliged to serve as "dienstplichtigen" (conscripts) from 1917. Older Minahassan men, as off 32, were obliged to join the "Landstorm" (Home Guard). During WW II many Minahassan were hold captive as Japanese POW's.

All led to a Minahassan sense of being different from the rest of the archipelago. During the struggle for Indonesian independence most Minahassans favoured the Dutch. The appointment, by the Sukarno government, of a Manadonese Protestant Christian as the first republican Governor of Eastern Indonesia won support in Manahassa. However inefficient government, governmental monopolies and the threat of Communism caused rebellion, called Permesta Revolt. Sukarno ordered to bomb Manado in 1958 and to invade Minahassa. The Permesta Revolt ended in 1961 and central authority was enhanced at the expense of local autonomy.



**Packet boat ss "Bontekoe" arrives at Gorontalo, 1923
Parepare 1935 (below)**



Collection Dirk Teeuwen, Holland



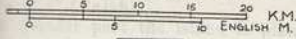
Magazine "Tropisch Nederland" Volume 1934-35, Amsterdam page 307



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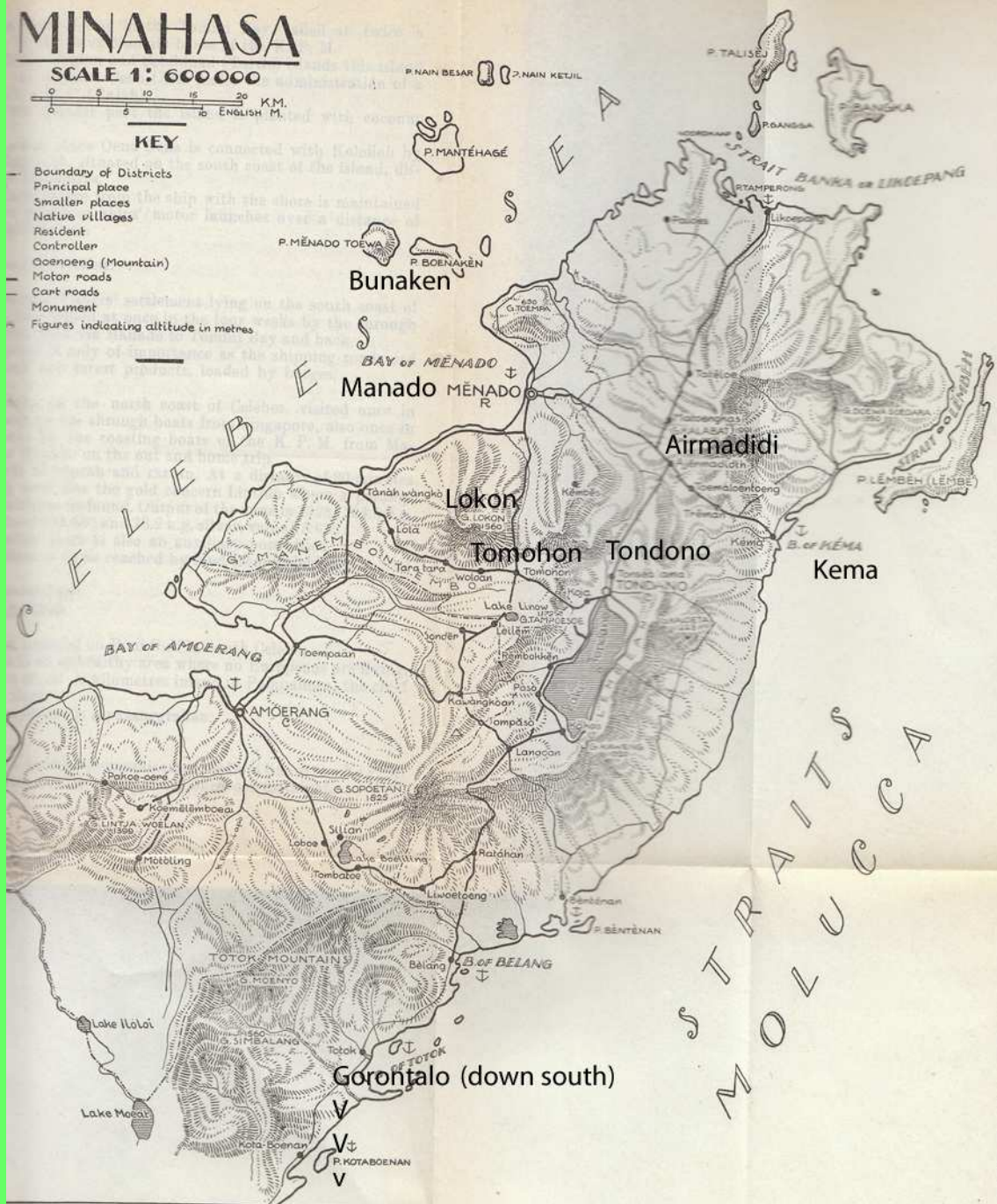
MINAHASA

SCALE 1: 600 000



KEY

- Boundary of Districts
- Principal place
- Smaller places
- Native villages
- Resident
- Controller
- Ooenoeng (Mountain)
- Motor roads
- Cart roads
- Monument
- Figures indicating altitude in metres



Van Stockum's Travellers' Handbook: Dutch East Indies; The Hague Holland 1935, page 534

Sources and notes

1. North Celebes/Sulawesi, Sangir Archipelago
2. V.O.C.: Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, Dutch East-India Company
3. Pulau means island.
4. Robertus Padtbrugge, 1637(Paris)–1703 (Amersfoort, Holland); governor of Ternate and the Moluccas, 1676-1680.
5. Mardijker, pronounce "mardikers" is a Dutch designation. In fact a corruption of the Malay word "merdeka", which means freedom.
6. In: Corpus Diplomaticus Neerlandico-Indicum 1934, vol. III, no 425
7. On the northern coast of Java
8. Consulted literature
 - a. Magazine "Tropisch Nederland" (Holland in the Tropics), volume 1937-1938: Verkuyl, ir. A. H., Minahassa; Amsterdam, page 307-340
 - b. Gedenkboek van Nederlandsch-Indië 1898-1923 (Memorial book of Dutch East-India 1898-1923); Batavia 1923
 - c. Vlekke, B. H. M.: The story of the Dutch East-Indies; Cambridge Massachusetts 1945
 - d. Cribb, R.: Historical Atlas of Indonesia; Singapore 2000, page 166



Catholic church in Wolohan, near Manado 1921

Photo Dirk Teeuwen, Holland



Benteng Otanaha, detail of a Portuguese-Dutch fortress, Gorontalo



Photo Dirk Teeuwen, Holland

**TaraTara Museum, costume (copy) from the year of 1200 AC, shoes (original) from 1996
Historical town TaraTara, Minahassa 1996**

Photo Dirk Teeuwen, Holland



Bunaken, seen from Manado 1996



End